

Council for Labor & Economic Growth
Quarterly Meeting
Automation Alley
Monday, September 17, 2007
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wilma Abney	Senator Judson Gilbert II	Daniel Phelan
Derick Adams	Doyle Hayes	Gene Pierce
Lizabeth Ardisana	Thomas Hickner	Hubert Price, Jr.
Paul Arsenault	Robert Jacquart	Trenda Rusher
Kenneth Baker	John James	Michael Schmidt
Stephen Balbierz	Eleanor Josaitis	Jaye Shamsiddeen
Paul Bergan	Janet Joseph	Kester So
Lloyd Bingham, Ph. D.	Thomas Kimble	Marjorie Sorge
Ted Blashak	Jack Litzenberg	Mitch Tomlinson
Keith Cooley	Frank Lope	John Voorhorst
Bradley Dyer	Shelly Norman-Hill	George Yost
David Eisler	Sharon Parks	J. Michael Zelle
Fern Espino, Ph. D.	William Peterson	Lynn Zuellig
Michael Flanagan		

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ismael Ahmed	James Epolito	Timothy Nelson
Senator Glen Anderson	Patrick (Shorty) Gleason	Janet Olszewski
Harry Bonner, Sr.	Norma Hagenow	Sharon Peters
Matt Brynildson	Dennis Hands	Sharon Rivera
Patrick Cannon	Mayor George Heartwell	Mary Thornton
Matthew Chambers	John Hernandez	John Van Wyck
Representative Ed Clemente	Representative Bill Huizenga	Cindy Warner
Jennifer Cornell	Alan Low	

I. CALL TO ORDER/OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Marge Sorge, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and welcomed Council members. Ms. Sorge thanked Automation Alley and the Oakland County Workforce Development Board for hosting the meeting, and acknowledged CLEG member Thomas Kimble and John Almstadt, Executive Director of Oakland County Michigan Works! and his staff for coordinating the details. Ms. Sorge announced the recent appointment to CLEG of Senator Jud Gilbert and Senator Glenn Anderson, who was unable to attend today's meeting, as well as Michigan Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed to replace Marianne Udow who has retired from state service.

Ms. Sorge offered congratulations to CLEG member Eleanor Josaitis, who will be honored in November as the first recipient of the Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards Unsung Hero Award, named in her honor. In other announcements CLEG secretary Renita Phillips is on an extended medical leave through December, and will be temporarily replaced by Stephanie Imgrund. Ms. Sorge also acknowledged Lu Ann Dunsford as the new CEO of Michigan Works! Association, and congratulated Linda Kinney Merrill in her retirement.

Ms. Sorge invited Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) Director Keith Cooley to say a few words. Director Cooley talked about the charge laid out to CLEG at the June meeting, and emphasized that Council support of No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) is crucial. Director Cooley expressed eagerness to hear from each of CLEG's committees and their work to date, in particular two committees with recommendations, the Industry Sector and Work Readiness Credential committees. He assured Council members that their recommendations will be integrated into the State's workforce strategy.

DLEG Deputy Director Andy Levin provided an update on NWLB. A video clip of Governor Granholm on CNN-Lou Dobbs Tonight was shown. Mr. Levin talked about the NWLB action team, the policy and implementation work groups that have been created, the training that has taken place across the state since July, service delivery, and current funding available for the program. Ms. Sorge stated that she would be submitting an op-ed to her local paper in support of the initiative and encouraged CLEG members to do the same, with DLEG staff available to provide assistance.

II. ACTION ITEMS-CONSENT AGENDA

The action items on the consent agenda include approval of the following:

- June 4, 2007 quarterly meeting minutes;

A MOTION was made by, Ms. Sharon Parks, CLEG member, and SUPPORTED by CLEG members to approve the action items.

III. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Derick Adams, Tackling Workforce Issues Facing Key Industry Sectors Committee Chair, provided an update on the committee's work. The Industry Sector Committee is charged with analyzing and recommending to the Governor the most crucial needs, opportunities, and required action the state should undertake to help employers in key industry sectors succeed. Mr. Adams stated the recommendations brought forward by the committee are a result of the work of two subcommittees formed to focus on the advanced manufacturing and health care sectors. Industry experts were invited to augment each of the subcommittees. A summary of recommendations on advanced manufacturing is as follows:

- Package and direct incumbent worker training funds toward advanced manufacturing;
- Make assessment and development of soft skills a priority in the state's education and workforce development systems;
- Launch an effort to re-invigorate apprenticeship programs in Michigan;
- Develop a marketing/communications plan to bring a positive focus to advanced manufacturing; and
- Address future workforce gaps in high skills manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Adams stated that the health care industry is experiencing a culture change in the delivery of services. More care is provided at home that will require a different set of skills. Recommendations on the health care industry sector include:

- Continue and expand accelerated training programs;
- Make assessment and development of soft skills a priority in the state's education and workforce development systems;
- Prepare the education system for new and growing occupations in health care;
- Develop a communication and marketing plan to promote population centered care, including: high quality customer service, team approaches, empathy, care navigation, and the ability to use new technologies; and
- Invest in on-going education for health care workers throughout the progression from entry-level to incumbent workers.

Comments and discussion from the full Council included:

- A discussion on the cost of the recommendations. Mr. Adams indicated the Committee has discussed targeting programs already in place to key industry sectors;
- Adding a bullet to the recommendation that pertains to soft skills to emphasize its importance in early childhood education;
- Manufacturing continues to be the largest sector of jobs in Michigan, with 18% of the state's jobs in advanced manufacturing;
- Adding a bullet to the recommendation to address future workforce gaps for high skills manufacturing jobs that will be addressed in part through Early College programs designed to attract career tech students, which provide college credits to students while still enrolled in high school;
- Michigan's Department of Education has addressed soft skills with the addition of employability skills in the 21st Century Applied Learning curriculum;
- A recommendation for more faculty to provide supervision for individuals completing health care internships; and
- Aligning with initiatives already in place at community colleges (ie; don't start a new program – align with existing best practices).

Next steps for the Committee would be to prioritize the recommended actions and define expectations.

Mr. Jack Litzenberg, Chair, Creating a State Culture of Entrepreneurship Committee, talked about the Committee's vision of entrepreneurship for Michigan, where you can create your own job by starting a business. The Committee has been charged with helping to develop a comprehensive education and training system for entrepreneurs. Highlights of Mr. Litzenberg's update are:

- An education program in Michigan that offers youth experiential learning in starting a business, similar to Junior Achievement;
- Greater recognition of entrepreneurship as a viable employment option;
- A shared, strategic, and flexible entrepreneurship agenda around which to engage stakeholders, foster collaboration; and encourage innovation;
- A seamless, networked, and supported service infrastructure for business development;
- Improved ability to identify and access quality education and training opportunities for entrepreneurs; and
- A shift in attitudes regarding Michigan's global relationships to show that Michigan can create and sustain new businesses in global economy.

Mr. Litzenberg stated that DLEG leadership would provide guidance and collaboration with other State departments to support an aligned system of stakeholders. Next steps for the Committee include a road map outlining their recommendations.

Ms. Sorge, Chair of the Global Competitiveness Committee, stated the Committee has been charged to find measures on where Michigan sits globally. The Committee has begun to research measures for assessing global competitiveness in education, workforce comparisons, and innovation. The Committee also plans to analyze global workforce strategies and develop collaborative partnerships to inventory, study, and coordinate all initiatives statewide geared toward a more global economy. Some of their work will be in conjunction with the Entrepreneur Committee to identify how entrepreneurs are and will be impacted by globalization.

An update on the work of the Low-Wage Worker Strategy Committee was provided by Mr. Mitch Tomlinson, Chair, and Ms. Sharon Parks, Vice-Chair. The Committee has been charged to develop a strategy and an initiative that bridges basic skills development into community college enrollment. Mr. Tomlinson talked about the need to improve the skill set and education of Michigan's workforce to compete in the 21st century, the percentage of Michigan's residents that have low or very low literacy skills, and how the lack of basic reading and writing skills prevents pursuing a two or four year degree for these individuals. In addition, available funding has declined resulting in drops in adult education enrollment for the people who need it most. These are all issues that must be addressed in Michigan. The Committee has developed a work plan that includes:

- An Adult Policy Forum;
- Building a statewide coalition;
- Researching promising practices;

- Developing a legislative outreach strategy; and
- Pursuing foundation support of an adult education initiative or demonstration project.

Ms. Parks provided information on the Adult Education Policy Forum to be held in Lansing on October 8.

IV. WORK READINESS CERTIFICATE

Mr. Michael Schmidt, Co-Chair of the Work Readiness Certificate (WRC) Committee, stated he is Co-Chair of the WRC Committee with Matt Chambers, who was unable to attend but very devoted to the WRC project. The WRC Committee is comprised of two of CLEG's standing committees, the Educational Attainment and Accelerating Re-employment committees. They have been charged with making a recommendation whether Michigan should create a statewide WRC, and if so, help design and implement the new system.

Mr. Schmidt provided a definition of a WRC, and talked about the research conducted by Committee staff and reviewed by the Committee, including research on similar efforts in other states, a survey of the Michigan Works! Agencies, a survey of Michigan employers, and research of other existing credential and assessment efforts in Michigan.

Questions and comments included:

- The soft skills listed in several of the research documents were not anything individuals could be tested for. A discussion ensued on soft skills and the ability, or inability to test individuals on behavioral traits;
- The challenge of employer buy-in of a WRC, and also the validity for job seekers;
- The impact of a WRC on employee retention and productivity. There is a lack of data from the states researched in regards to the impact of WRCs on employee retention and productivity. States researched either are in the process of collecting data or have not collected any;
- A discussion on the costs associated with statewide implementation. More research is needed on the cost of implementing a WRC;
- The states chosen for research were picked because of the amount of research they had conducted on WRCs or are in various stages of implementation of a WRC statewide;
- States with a WRC initiative in place have included a remedial component;
- Research continues with other states regarding the impact of a WRC on special populations and people with disabilities;
- The opportunity for alignment with regional initiatives across Michigan and other state departments; and
- Michigan needs to do something proactive to give us a competitive advantage.

Mr. Schmidt stated the WRC Committee recommends moving forward with a statewide WRC, in order for Michigan to remain competitive with neighboring states. Council

members then participated in a facilitated discussion that focused on the benefits of a statewide WRC, and the questions that would need to be answered in order to move forward.

Benefits:

- Spotlight worker readiness across the state
- Drive improvements in preparing workers
- Reduce turnover
- Increase the self-confidence of workers
- Attract business
- Improve the perception of Michigan (Example: Indiana)
- Business expectations matched with education
- Standardization eases quantification
- First step in addressing soft skills issues
- Help workers who have lost jobs
- Opportunity to blaze trails regarding soft skills and different learners
- Alignment of education, government, and business
- Could be one of a number of tools; assess baseline
- Opportunity to align with NWLB
- Partner with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), education, and business

Questions/Issues:

- Not rely on one test
- Can a more focused employer survey be done?
- How do we ensure the credential is for skills employers want?
- Will employers and jobseekers value?
- Could the local areas use other tools?
- Will this label people?
- Will this screen people in or out?
- Will there be a remediation component?
- What are the costs associated with implementation?
- Have WRCs been validated with job seekers and employers in other states?
- How do we get employer buy-in?
- How will a soft skills component be incorporated?
- Can a pilot phase in certain areas be done before it is implemented statewide?
- In regards to soft skills, should we be looking at the K-12 system and what they measure?
- How does this get implemented and mandated statewide?

A MOTION was made by Mr. Paul Bergan, CLEG member, and SUPPORTED by Mr. Gene Pierce, to move the process of creating of a statewide WRC forward, taking into consideration the questions that will require further research.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT/CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Sorge offered the opportunity for public comment. Mr. Bill Guest, from the West Michigan WIRED region, offered to share all of the data collected on the West Michigan WIRED Career Readiness Certificate initiative, and stated currently there are over 140 employers in the West Michigan region engaged in the effort.

Council members were encouraged to fill out the evaluations to aid in the development of future meeting agendas. The next CLEG meeting is on December 3, 2007 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the Lansing Community College MTEC.

There being no further business, Ms. Sorge adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the information in these minutes will be made in alternative format (large type, audio tape, etc.) upon request.

Approved December 3, 2007